

Mint of the United States,

Philadelphia, February 18. 1861.

Sir,

I send you enclosed a copy of a letter I have recently received from W. Elmore, the Superintendent of the Branch mint at New Orleans. It appears ^{from} this communication that a Committee acting under the order of a Convention has taken possession of the Branch Mint in the name of the State of Louisiana. The right to coin money - one of the highest acts of sovereignty - being expressly granted to the United States, (Art. 1. Sec 8. Const. U.S.) and withheld from the States, (Sec. 10) the actions of the Louisiana Convention cannot but be regarded as revolutionary in its character, and destructive of the rights of the people and government of the United States. By the laws establishing branches of the Mint of the United States (Act of the general direction of the business of the said branches March 3. 1835) they are under the control and regulation of the Director of the Mint at Philadelphia, subject to the

approbation of the Secretary of the Treasury; and for that purpose it shall be the duty of the said Director to prescribe such Regulations, and require such returns, periodically and occasionally, as shall appear to him to be necessary, for the purpose of carrying into effect the intentions of this Act in establishing the said Branches: also for the purpose of discriminating the Coin which shall be stamped at each branch and at the Mint itself: also, for the purpose of preserving uniformity of weight, form and fineness in the Coin stamped at each place, and for that purpose to require the transmission and delivery to him at the Mint, from time to time, of such parcels of the Coinage of each branch as he shall think proper, to be subjected to such assays and tests as he shall direct.

My instructions require weekly Reports of its operations from the Branch Mint at New Orleans; and monthly returns of parcels of coinage taken from each delivery of coin from the Coiner to the

Measures. These reports and coins for the month of January have been received; but the weekly returns since the close of the month have been omitted to be sent to me. It thus appears that the institution in question is not conducting its operations in a lawful manner; and although it is still a branch of the Mint of the United States - for no action of the State of Louisiana can legally alter its relation to the General Government - yet as its coinage from the close of the month of January will not be subject to the tests required by law, it has practically ceased to be a branch of the mint. The coinage of that branch is designated by the letter O on the reverse side of each piece. The coins struck in January are legal coins of the United ^{States}; but as these pieces cannot be distinguished from other coins struck at that time, having the date of 1861; the whole coinage of this year ought to be discredited by the government. The announcement ^{must} should be made, either by the

Proclamation of the President, and by Act of Congress, if the former should not be deemed proper, that the Coins of the branch mint at New Orleans of the year 1861, and not of the Coinage of the United States, and are therefore not a legal tender in the payment of debts: said Coins are designated by the letter O on the reverse of each piece. I may here state, that the Coins stamped at San Francisco, are designated by the letter S; those of Seaboard (Georgia) by the letter D, and of Charlotte (N.C.) by the letter C. The Coinage of the Mint at Philadelphia may be known by the absence of any letter, or a mint mark.

The coining dies are prepared at the Mint in Philadelphia for the branches. I furnished, at the close of the last year, for the New Orleans branch the following number of working dies for 1861,

Double eagle 3 obverses and 3 reverses.
 Eagle 2 obverses. Half eagle 2 obverses. Three dollar 2 Reverses (the date is on the reverse of this piece).
 Quarter eagle, 4 obverses. Gold dollar, 2 reverse.
 (Same as three-dollar piece) Silver dollar, 2 obverses. Half dollar 12 obverses. Quarter dollar 4 obverses. Dime 2 obverses, 2 reverses.
 Half-dime 2 obverses, 2 reverses. In